[Since different authors assign variant functions to the ajwogo, jal yat and kareth, for information on these religious and magical practitioners in their various contexts see also categories 756, 791, and 754.]

1:Evans-Pritchard E-4 (no date) 1948
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paid to the king alone.[1] A different picture of the king's part in the settlement of disputes is painted by Mr Oyler of the American Mission, who witnessed the settlement of a feud, which had been going on in a district for more than three years, by the joint intervention of the king and the Government. From his account it is evident that the king could not have imposed a settlement had the disputants not been ready to accept one, that the part played in it by the king was that of peacemaker and not of judge, and that his participation can better be described as sacerdotal than as governmental.[2] The king of the Shilluk reigns but does not govern.

The king's sacerdotal role in the settlement of feuds gives us a clue to what is confirmed by a great weight of further evidence: his sacral position in Shilluk society. Our authorities, indeed, speak of the king as the 'Hoherpriester des Landes',[3] of 'the royal and priestly line' and of its 'priestly function',[4] and of the king as 'the high priest of the tribal religion'.[5] Both his functions and his status are primarily of a ritual order. He makes sacrifices on

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 162.
[2] 'The Shilluk Peace Ceremony', *S.N. and ?* (1930), pp. 296-9.
[3] Hofmayr, *op. cit.* p. 152.
[4] Bonhoiver and Giffen, *op. cit.* p. 197.
[5] Pumphrey, *op. cit.* p. 19.

He makes sacrifices on important occasions, especially for rain and for victory in war, and it is his duty to provide cattle for the sacred herds of Nyikang at Nyilual and Wau and a canoe for Nyikang's shrine at Nyibodho. Nyikang, the culture hero of the Shilluk, their first king, and the creator of their nation, is immanent in him and this makes him the double pivot of Shilluk society, the political head of the nation and the centre of the national cult. The kingship is the common symbol of the Shilluk people and, Nyikang being immortal, an abiding institution which binds past and present and future generations.

The correspondence of political structure with religious cult can be seen at every point of the structure. The territorial segments of the nation and their association with lineages is, as we have noted, validated by the myth of Nyikang's parcelling out of his conquests among the clans, the strands of which are, moreover, caught up into a single mythological point, Nyikang. Some trace their descent from his companions, some from his collateral relatives, others from the original inhabitants of the country conquered by him, and yet others from men who played some part in his saga. The lineage heads who are the chiefs of settlements have ritual duties to the kingship: in

[1] i.e., the King. - Analyst 17

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
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classes of people, animals, and even things, in which Nyakang may be immanent or with which he is associated.

The chief incarnations and manifestations of Nyakang are as follows:—

1. The spirit of Nyakang is regarded as closely associated with certain shrines, which are in fact cenotaphs, for though spoken of as his tombs it is well known that he is not buried in any of them.

2. Each Shilluk king incarnates the spirit of Nyakang.

3. This is equally true of certain animals, and may possibly apply to all the members of particular species, as it certainly does to individual members.

4. The spirit of Nyakang is regarded as being present, at any rate at certain times, in his wooden effigy kept at Akurwa.

There are ten cenotaph "tombs" of Nyakang (*kwogo Nyakang*) in the Shilluk country, the most important being at Akurwa and Fenikang. Each shrine consists of a group of two or more huts—of the same circular form but rather larger than dwelling huts—together with a small more or less circular enclosure, called *kuk*, usually fenced with millet stalks. The huts are particularly well thatched, and the apex of the roof terminates in an ostrich egg from which there projects the blade of a spear, while the surrounding fence is kept in notably good repair. These huts, with the enclosed area, are sacred, for, with the exception of the princes of Nyakang and the old people concerned in keeping them clean, no one may enter the enclosure or even approach it without due cause. In 1910 the Akurwa shrine consisted of two huts, that at Fenikang of five, and these shrines, designed on the plan of a Shilluk homestead (with, however, the addition of the *kuk*), are so built because they are regarded as the homes of Nyakang.

The attendants and priests of the royal grave shrines and the cenotaph shrines of Nyakang are known as *kwondi* (lit. "king's wife"). This term includes certain old men, who appear to have an hereditary connection with the shrine (but on this matter we are unable to be precise), ex-wives of kings, who having borne a reasonable number of children[1] or attained the menopause are sent to take charge of shrines, and men and women of advanced years who are liable to more or less epileptiform attacks, held to indicate possession by Nyakang or a dead king. The *kwondi* keep the shrine clean, receive the sacrifices,

[1] Hofmayr states that the royal wives do not commonly bear more than three children, after this they are sent to a shrine and become *kwondi* (op. cit., 146).

2-Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
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and officiate in the ceremonies, but it is perhaps true to say that only the bones for minor sacrifices (recovery from illnesses, etc.) are killed by them. Hofmayr states that the distinctive mark of the Ayood is a necklace of disc beads of ostrich egg-shell, but that they also wear anklets of glass beads, white and green. The Ayood eat the flesh of the sacrifices and drink the milk of the cattle belonging to the shrine; they are responsible too for the disposal of the bones of the sacrifice, which they cast into the river.

The contents of the kwogo vary, but they always include certain sacred spears, called ulwak, representing those used by Nyakang and his companions.

In 1910 we were told that one of the five huts of the Fwolkang shrine was to a special sense the house of Nyakang, which he was thought to inhabit. It was distinguished by a number of very rough paintings on its outer wall, some of which could be recognized as representing animals, but we could not learn that the paintings had any special significance. Before the door of the hut were a number of horns of the cattle slain in sacrifice (in 1911 wrongly described as elephant tusks), their thread ends thrust into the ground; within these were said to be skins on the floor, as if for Nyakang to rest upon. Some of the "spears of Nyakang" (ulwak) are kept here, and there is in this shrine an extremely sacred wood, which may be kept in this hut or may be preserved with some of the sacred spears and a number of elephant tusks in one of the other huts of the shrine, used by the guardians and for rooting the millet brought as offerings when the crop is cut. In 1911 we were struck afresh with the resemblance of the shrine to a homestead, with exceptionally large huts; it had been rebuilt since 1910, when we first visited Fwolkang, and there were now no horns in front of any hut. At this time (1911) the shrine had been entrusted by the king to the care of a most intelligent elderly Dinka woman, by name Aker—widow of the kings Kur and Fadiet—who was the chief priestess of the shrine. She had three huts and a cattle byre near the shrine; in one hut she kept her bees, and here millet was ground, the two others were for her slaves, who as well as her cattle were provided by the king. We are not certain whether she ever slept in the shrine. According to Shilluk custom Aker had left Kodok during her two pregnancies, but on neither occasion had she been sent to Fwolkang; it is, indeed, improbable that a royal wife would be sent to a village containing a shrine, as it might be difficult to accommodate her cattle and those of the shrine attendants as well as the village beasts.

C.Seligman & Seligman E-6 (709-1910) 1932
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of the divine ancestors as well as the village huts. The guardians of these shrines are probably chosen entirely for their efficiency, and we had full opportunity to note the wealthy manners and amiable character of our friend Aber.

The clans Golobongo and Pennisi are closely associated with the upkeep of the Fenikang shrine, indeed the Golobongo clan, and probably to a lesser extent the Pennisi, all are members of the shrine and when sexually pure can enter it freely. Children of these clans before the age of puberty and men to a state of chastity may enter the shrine, but if a man should do so after copulating with a woman he would die. A married man whose wife is pregnant will in all probability be living chastely, and such men we saw entering the shrine without comment being made by the villagers. The chief (rago) of the local group of clan Golobongo always kills any beast that may be sacrificed at the shrine. Aber said that his son, one Ayuriel, had controlled her in her duties as priestess of the shrine; it was, however, evident that Aber was of more importance than Ayuriel, though how much this may have been due to her of character could not be determined.

The different functions of the huts constituting the shrine further indicate that the pattern of the original shrine was a homestead and that the shrine itself is the homestead of Nyakang. The information we give concerning the huts composing the shrine—each having its own name—is in part the result of our inquiries at Fenikang in part additional information provided by Mr. Hasty.

The names of the huts are: Nyikayo, Kwayo or Dowal, Wol Mac, Dag or Kwayo,[1] Dowal.

Nyikayo was the hut in which lived the widow of Nyakang; how many was said to be second.

Dowal was the name of the hut in Nyakang's homestead in which Nyakang used to sleep; whence the name Kwayo, the word used of royalty for "sleep" (other folk -ube). This is the most sacred hut of the shrine, shown on Pl. VIII with the horns of sacrificed beasts in the ground before its door. In it are kept the former possessions of Nyakang, his sword—alleged to be of metal with "eyes", i.e. probably having its wire covered as a leopard-skin—his drum, and his lyre (shown) said to have a metal body. Beside these are eight

[1] The reason for one of the huts having the same name is that as will be seen immediately, both were sleeping places. Alternate names at Fenikang for Nyikayo and Wol Mac were Nagolo and Kan respectively.

2:Seligman & Seligman E-6 (1909-1910) 1932
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the shrine since the beginning of the last harvest is made into beer for this occasion. Our Fenikang informants told us that the king should himself come to their village for this rite, and the above short description is mainly from notes made at Fenikang. But, whatever the theory, the usual practice at the present day is for the king to send the animals given to Nyakang to the shrines, and for the *kwath* to pray for rain as they are sacrificed.

We are indebted to Yangjok, one of the most important of the Shilluk chiefs, for the following account of the rain ceremony as it is held at Aong, where stands one of the *kwar Nyakang*. A bullock, or bull, and a hen are killed before the shrine of Nyakang, each animal being killed by one of the *kwath Nyakang*. Before the ceremony the ground within the shrine enclosure and that outside the fence is swept clean by a number of old women. Drums are placed in the open space near the centre of the village and men and women dance vigorously, first holding spears and other weapons, then raising their hands, singing and praising Nyakang. If there is a tree in the open space the sacrificial bullock is tied to it. At the end of the dance the chief of the district pours water, recently brought from the river, into the hollow of his hand, spits into it, and sprinkles the bullock with this. The bullock is upturned high up in the flank, so that the wound is not immediately fatal, and is allowed to go free. If he wanders towards the river it is a good sign, and if he falls on his left side, or goes towards the shrine of Nyakang, it is good, but if he falls on his right side it is bad; in theory the bullock should go to the river and come back to the place he was upturned, and it seemed that in practice little difficulty was experienced by the practised Shilluk herdsmen in guiding the victim in the right direction. The beast is skinned and cut up where it falls, and the flesh is boiled and eaten by all except pregnant women and their husbands and men and women who have had intercourse during the previous night. Care is taken not to break the bones, which with all fragments are thrown into the river. The head, one forelimb, and the bowels compose the share of the attendants of the shrine, who cook and eat their portions with the rest of the community. The skin is prepared and used as a mat in the hut of Nyakang, where the sacred spear is kept with which the sacrificial animals are killed.

At the harvest festival it is usual to bring ears of ripening millet and to thrust them into the thatch of certain of the huts containing

2:Seligman & Seligman E-6 (1909-1910) 1932
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performance was delayed, the difficulty being the provision of a bull for the sacrifice. It was the duty of the dimiik chief, Dimjok of the Gokdongo clan, to provide the sacrifice, but as a certain man from the village of Bura owned him a bull he was endeavouring to obtain this and to kill it for the ceremony instead of taking one from his own herd. How long negotiations might have continued it is impossible to say, for Dimjok, though a *chief*, was old and feeble and seemed to have little authority in his dimiik. After about a fortnight we announced our intention of leaving, but Aker begged us to remain, and expressed great regret that we should go before the ceremony. We naturally supposed this pressure to be formal, and that the village was merely waiting for us to leave in order to perform the sacrifice; however we went with her to the village of Nyelwal where the chief and his assessors and a few old men were assembled. Here Aker harangued the men, frequently making marks on the ground and breaking off pieces of grass and laying them down one by one by way of emphasis and explanation. The conference lasted a long time and she begged us to leave patiently, seeming certain that she must gain her way. We cannot say how far she went into the matter of the debt from Bura, or if at any time she had any official voice in the affair, but she undoubtedly had the authority of the king behind her and she used it freely. Towards the end of the conference the men's tones had changed completely. Aker announced to us that the ceremony would take place the next day and that Dimjok would provide the bull.

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At dawn next morning the drums were beaten for about half an hour. At 8 a.m. there was no sign of festivity in the village, and women, including Aker's servants, were still at work on the shrine enclosure, assembling and plastering and removing the smaller weeds. Yet by 2 p.m. probably more than 500 people had assembled and dancing had begun. In the centre of the open space to the west of the shrine a large and a small drum were being beaten, the dancers surging in spirals round and away from them. Numbers of older men and women were sitting near the huts on the edge of the dancing-ground, and hundreds of spears were piled against the thatches, for though all the men came to the village carrying their spears no one held one during the ceremony except Aker, who carried in her left hand a narrow pointed spear, in her right a whip with a double lash, and wore round her head a fringe of black goat-hair. Her cloth was knotted over the left shoulder in overall masculine style. She

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
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danced alone inside the enclosure of the shrine, and occasionally came out and danced round outside it, her movements resembling those of the men rather than the women dancers. Tune and rhythm were frequently changed, and it was obvious that the figures were traditional. A number of young men wore leopard and other skins suspended from the waist and hanging behind, almost all had decorated anklets and armlets of different kinds, belts of disc beads were worn round the waist, and plumes suspended from the forearms. Head-dresses varied a good deal; the characteristic "Tam o' Shanter", which we remembered as the dominant fashion for young warriors ten years earlier, was only worn by a few, the more popular style apparently being a flat, circular mass of felted hair on either side of the head; a great number had the head shaved and wore a wig or crown of sheep's wool. They carried millet or flowery grass stalks, some had clubs and parrying shields, and the ceremonial bow-derivative covered with strips of metal, called *dang*. Groups of children, decked in whatever finery they could get, took part in the dance, solemnly imitating their elders. The women, who danced in separate contingents, all carried hippo-hide whips, and, more frequently than the men, they left the large dancing-ground and passed in procession round the outside of the shrine enclosure. Whenever the drum ceased the dancing stopped immediately, and the clear note of a kudu horn trumpet could be heard.

After the dancing had continued for some hours Aker was noticed waiting in the *ludi* with a number of men—we believe there were eight—all carrying spears. These were the spears of Nyakang, which had just been brought forth from the hut Kwayo; one large spearhead was covered by a sheath. A bull was led across the dancing-ground and then released, when it sauntered into the shrine enclosure and wandered about unmolested. Aker, carrying her spear, danced within the enclosure, and then left it, and stepping high, danced round the drum, while the men went alone to the khor to wash the spears. The bull was now caught and held outside the entrance to the shrine. Almost before we realized that anything was happening—very quickly, yet without any apparent hurry or confusion—all the guests departed, and the dancing ground was all but deserted; besides Aker and a small group of chiefs and elders, only members of the Golobogu and Pameiti clans remained in the vicinity of the shrine. These men now sat in a row while Aker and Ayurial stood beside the bull, which was held on each side by ropes, a man grasping its tail. One by one

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
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the men rose and each made a short speech, to which Aker answered; these speeches were appeals to Nyakang not to let the millet suffer from the ravages of the birds. When all had spoken, Awejok, brother's son to Ayurial, stroked the bull's flank with a spear and then thrust it into the beast. Immediately he ran with the spear to the khor to wash it. The wound was oblique and only a few inches deep. The bull was now guided into the enclosure of the shrine, where it was stabbed again with another spear and led into the enclosure of Kwayo while Aker and the chiefs remained just outside. The groans of the dying bull were heard for some time. The chiefs now followed into the courtyard of Kwayo but we do not know whether any of them entered the hut. The flesh of the sacrifice was divided and eaten subsequently by Aker and the men of Golobogu and Pameiti. A band of warriors in full dress bearing their spears now returned to the dancing-ground, danced once round the sacred enclosure, then knelt down and clapped their hands and went silently away. We were told that the spear used to kill the bull was one presented specially by the king; had one of the original spears of Nyakang been used no one could have eaten the flesh of the bull and survived.

It must be noted that before the ceremony we were told that Ayurial was the hereditary bull slayer, but his paternal nephew certainly thrust the first spear; we did not ascertain whether he or Ayurial finally killed and cut up the beast. Probably the matter was of little consequence, as Ayurial was old and Awejok would succeed him. Before the ceremony we were also told that the beast would be stabbed outside the fence but would enter the shrine before dying, and this was so. The sacred character of the spears was a matter of importance; the large spear referred to above was kept sheathed throughout the ceremony until used to stab the bull, thus emphasizing its sacred quality.

So much for what we saw. We were told that the spear would be washed in the holy water kept in the hut Kwayo and that after this it would be taken to the river to be washed. The right forelimb of the bull would be cut off and shown round the village—we believe that this went to Ayuriel—the rest of the beast was Nyakang's and would be taken to Aker's home, there to be eaten by the old men.

Our description of the worship of Nyakang may conclude with a short account of his appearance in animal form, as well as some reference to the cult of his mother Nikaiya, almost as much crocodile

2:Seligman & Seligman, E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
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and habitat. The spirits of the bush are we believe in the main unimportant, but the river people and their river cattle play a more considerable part in the mythology of the people. One of the groups of people whom Nyakang found in the land were fish-men, or river-men with the power of turning into fish, while the mysterious cows whose dung provided the "ashes of denying" (p. 102) had their original home in the river.

It is convenient to consider the cult of the dead Shilluk kings apart from that of Nyakang at his cenotaph shrines, but it must be remembered that in every king there is immanent the spirit of Nyakang, so that the worship rendered them at their grave shrines is ultimately only part of the cult of Nyakang.

Like the cenotaph shrines of Nyakang the royal grave shrines are called *kengo*, as opposed to the graves of commoners for which the word is *roro*.[1] Though smaller, they resemble the shrines of Nyakang in appearance, for the roofs of their constituent huts terminate in ostrich egg and spear-head. The guardians or priests (*bareth*) of these shrines are of the same class as those of the *kengo Nyakang*, viz. elderly women, often widows of the dead king, and old men, his former servants, or their descendants who have reached the requisite age, or, as a last resource when none of these can be found, old women or old men not specially connected with the dead king. Just as no one except the *bareth Nyakang* is allowed to enter the shrines of Nyakang, so no stranger may enter the royal grave shrines. A royal daughter never becomes a guardian of a shrine, but she may enter the grave shrine of her dead father and rub her hands on its floor for a blessing whenever she likes, as may the royal sisters. It seemed that these privileges did not extend to the shrines of other dead kings, nor even to the enclosed space around them. Should the spirit of a dead king appear to a royal daughter or sister in a dream and demand an offering, she would take a sheep to the guardians of the tomb and give it to one of them to sacrifice in the same way as a commoner. There are cattle belonging to the grave shrines of the kings, and offerings are made as at the shrines of Nyakang. Thus, when the millet crop threatens to fail, or epidemic sickness to attack the cattle, Nyakang or one of his successors will appear to someone in a dream and demand a sacrifice. This is told to the king, who will immediately send a cow and a bullock to one or more of the shrines

[1] So kings do not "die", but "go away", and in addressing the king a special court language is employed.

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
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is cured, and at the same time the burning out the eyes of the sheep is a type of what will happen to the person who cast the spell. His eyes will waste away. If the eyes of the person who cast the spell do not become inflamed, the cure does not take effect."[1]

The power of the *ajuago* is due to the immanence of the spirits of the early Shilluk kings. The guardians of the shrine of Nyakang might or might not be *ajuago*; they do not become *ajuago* because of their connection with the shrine, nor does their being *ajuago* alter their official position. According to our most reliable informant, only the spirits of Nyakang, Dag, and Boc (the first, third, and seventh of the Shilluk kings) become immanent in men to make them *ajuago*. When a man first becomes *ajuago* he becomes ill, perhaps waking, trembling and agitated, from a dream (in which he may afterwards say the spirit came to him). He consults an *ajuago*, who may tell him, "No, you are not ill, you have the spirit of Dag within you." A long and complicated ceremony is then performed in order that the spirit may not affect him too severely, for without this ceremony the spirit would be unduly strong in his body. We could not discover with certainty the exact nature of the change effected by the ceremony, but it seemed to us that our informant, one Akon Acol, who had in him the spirit of Dag, considered that the spirit, which had previously attacked his body in the rudest fashion, became attached rather to his spirit or soul. The ancestral spirit of any one king may be immanent in many *ajuago* at the same time, often passing at the death of an *ajuago*—or shortly afterwards—into one of his children, who thus becomes an *ajuago*. The power is frequently hereditary, and we know of one instance where a man waited for years for possession by Dag as his mother had been possessed, the condition coming finally as the result of a dream in which he saw a flame of supreme brightness; on waking he had the conviction that Dag was now immanent, and thereupon built the spirit-hut of which we reproduce a drawing (Fig. 9). The reality of the power is practically tested by the success of the would-be *ajuago* in effecting cures; if he fails, especially in his early cases, it will be recognized that he is not truly possessed.

We have recorded elsewhere—noting that our information was unconfirmed—the statement that female *ajuago* should not marry but might have lovers, and that according to our authority (unchecked) the husband of married *ajuago* would have access to their

[1] Rev. D. S. Oyler, "The Shilluk's Belief in the Evil Eye," *S.N. & R.*, ii, 1919, 125.

3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

retreat. Around our house they went in a regular stampede, and forming in a line again in front of the house for another charge. 535
This they repeated a number of times. Then a crowd of women, who had followed their husbands and sweethearts to battle, acted the part of foe, only to be overcome by the brave warriors and driven back. This part was very amusing. One old body with great bravery marched out and charged, using her pipe as her weapon. The men were a bit rough in driving her back, and she was evidently afraid her dear pipe would come to grief, so she took it inside our house and when next we saw her she was in the thick of a fray with a long weed as her weapon of offence and defence".] 541

The dry season is also the time for travelling. Relatives pay mutual visits, and marriageable young men go to the Nuers and Dinkas with spears, wire, stuffs, and dura, which they exchange for sheep and calves. 221 484 574 439

IV. RELIGION.

In the religion of the Shilluks three components ary clearly distinguishable: 1. Jwok (*jʊ̀ɔ̀k*) or God; 2. Nyikang (*Ńɪ̀kʊ̀ŋ̀*), the progenitor and national hero of the Shilluks; 3. ajwogo (*ájwɔ̀gɔ́*), the witch doctor or sorcerer. These three do not exist separate from each other, but have many relations amongst one another. There are still other forms of religious service, but they are not so prominent as the three mentioned. 771

"Jwok (*jʊ̀ɔ̀k*) is a supreme being, residing above". Whether he is regarded as creator is not sure. According to the sayings of some natives he surely is, but it seems probable that this belief, if there is such a one, is young, and must be traced back to Mohammedan or Christian influences. — On certain occasions an ox is killed as a sacrifice to Jwok, though this is done more frequently to Nyikang; prayers are also offered to Jwok, but according to my information, they have only one prayer to Jwok (for which vide page 171), while to Nyikang there are many. "Praying" to Jwok is expressed by a different word from that which serves for designating a prayer to Nyikang; the first is *lāmɛ* "to pray"; its original meaning is probably: to conjure. In praying to Nyikang *kwɔchɛ* "to ask for, to beg" is used. While the prayers to Nyikang are sung, and accompanied by dances, that one to Jwok is only spoken, not sung, and not accompanied by dancing. Jwok has no visible symbols or temples, nor are the prayers to him offered by a priest or sorcerer, but by the chief or village-elder. JWOK 776 782 [177] [793] ●

In the heart and mind of the Shilluk Jwok does not possess a deep-rooted rank. In some way they do attribute good and evil to him, and chiefly the 776

3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

773 THE COWS OF NYIKANG

The natives frequently speak of the "cows of Nyikang". This expression is used in two different meanings, one mythological and one real.

Once Nyikang caught a cow in the river in a fish-net. It had no ears or horns. This cow was the beginning of a sacred herd; if anyone touched them who was not of their attendants, he died. They live in the river and come out to feed at night. This herd was carried away; some say the Dervishes took them, while others affirm that it was the Turks. From the dung of this herd the "ashes of denying" were gained. The ashes were made by burning the dung of the sacred cattle. They are preserved at Wau and other villages dedicated to Nyikang, and are applied in ordeals, when cases of adultery are to be tried. When the woman has confessed, but the man denies, they take recourse to the "ashes of denying". An old chief, taking a spear in his hand, stands erect and offers the following prayer: "You Nyikang, the ashes are yours! If this man has not had intercourse with this woman, may he escape! But if he has had intercourse with the woman, may he die! If this woman accuses falsely, may she escape!" After this the chief takes some of the ashes on his hand and strikes the man with it. Then the one who has sworn falsely, will die.

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The other application of the term is to cows devoted to Nyikang by the king. Each year the king gives a steer and a cow to the villages in which the cows of Nyikang are kept. The male is killed and used for food. If any person not belonging to the attending herdsmen, eats of the meat of these animals, he becomes a servant of Nyikang, and must take up his residence in that village. The female is kept for breeding purposes. The *Kwa Obɔ̈ŋɔ* (vide page 130) herd these cattle. The chief of these villages of Nyikang seems to be Wau. If an outsider tried to milk one of these cows, he would die.

756 SORCERY

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The third factor in the religion of the Shilluks is the *ɔ̀jwɔ̈ŋɔ́*, and what is connected with him; *ɔ̀jwɔ̈ŋɔ́* is the witch doctor or sorcerer; the word is probably derived from *jwɔ̈k* "God", and would then mean: "one who is dependent on God", or "who has to do with God". As his most prominent business is to procure rain, Europeans generally call him rain-maker. He is the mediator between the people and Nyikang; he leads the dances and prayers to Nyikang, and presides at the sacrificial ceremonies. He heals also sicknesses by administering charms. Sick people apply to him with the present of a sheep or goat, or even an ox; the animal is killed, and the contents of its stomach are laid on the sick person's body; or the skin of the animal is cut into strips and these are fastened below the knee of the patient. This is also applied as a protection against dangers on a journey. When in the dry season the cattle are brought across the river, the sorcerer has to prepare charms to protect them from being seized by crocodiles. Besides this he is able to perform miracles, to kill

3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

a man by witchcraft, to prevent rain, and to cause the cattle to be barren. — There exist two kinds of sorcerers, the one whose functions are just mentioned, who plays an important and mostly beneficient *rôle* in public life and the official religion of the community, and another one whose doings are secret and who works for mischief. If this latter is convicted of his evil doings, he may be severely fined, or even sentenced to death. — Besides these the word *jal yaŋ* "man of medicine" is sometimes used; whether this is a synonym to *ajwɔ̈ŋgɔ*, or whether it designates still a third class of "witch"-, or ordinary "doctor", I do not know.

When possessed by a spirit (or by Jwok?) the sorcerers become ecstatic; the same seems to be the case with a newly elected king; here it seems to be the spirit of Nyikang, which falls on his follower, vide page 149. ECSTASY

The texts contain many mythological tales and allusions, which may in former times have formed part of the strictly religious belief of the people, but exist now merely as historical traditions, without having any active meaning to the present generation; this domain of their mental life is, however, not sufficiently known as yet to allow a decisive judgment. A reminiscence of sun-service is evident from 55, page 166. The Nile and Sobat are populated by water-people, who in figure are partly like men, partly like crocodiles or fish. They had, in the past, many intercourses with men. — According to some older writers the spirits of the Nile are worshipped. They have their own cattle-herds, which live with them in and on the banks of the Nile. They often dive up from the water, chiefly in misty weather. When a cow is fished out of the river, it is placed under the protection of the Nile-spirits and the sun-god [1]. MYTHOLOGY

The Shilluks have two expressions which may be translated by "soul" or "spirit" of a living person: *wei* and *tiŋɛ; wei* means "breath", and is the life-giving factor in man; the meaning of *tiŋɛ* is "shadow" of a man, or "image", as seen when looking into clear, still water. — The spirit of a dead person is called *aŋɛk; aŋɛk* is derived from *nɔ̈gɛ* to kill; *aŋɛk* probably means "one who kills", or "who is killed". The *aŋɛk* is feared. SOUL, SPIRIT

On the abode of deceased persons the Shilluks have but vague ideas; in one of the texts the dead are called "the people of the village of God", *jɔ̈ pɔ̈ jwɔk*. Whether they have a general belief in a life after death, is not known. ABODE OF THE DECEASED

Islam does up to now not find much sympathy with the Shilluks. They prefer their own religion to that of foreigners. Only a few people who have for a longer time lived in close touch with Mohammedans, chiefly those who have served as soldiers, adopt the religion of Mohammed, or at least wear Mohammedan amulets beside their own charms. It is admirable that these people, Shilluks, Dinkas Anywaks, and Nuers, though having lived for centuries side ISLAM

[1] This doubtlessly relates to the cows of Nyikang, vide the preceding.

3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

53. The Man who sacrificed Himself.

Kɛ́ a kɛn Ńikāń, a kɛ̱ti Atulfi ki wɑte bāńg, a ywoda nam ɛ́ rígò yi tik. Ka Ńikāń e jādɑ yɔ̄. Ka jal ma óḇgò e fɛchɑ kine: Ńikāń, yí rè chúń? Yi jati ki yɔ̄? Ye ko: àwɔ́, yá játɨ́ yɑ. Ka e ko: kɛ́ ya rūmi ki cham, yá ɣ bí, ka ya chwɑ̱p kí tɛ́ń, ka rɛ́mà mɔ́lá nám, tɨ̀k ɣ cẖɛ̱t. Ka Ńikań chwɔ̄bi jal ɛni, ka rɛmɛ mɑla nam, ka tɨ̀k e chɔ̄dɑ. Ka Ńikań yiti ki yɑ.[1]

When Nyikang came, he went to the Khor Atulfi with his followers; he found the river was shut up by the sudd, so that Nyikang did not find a passage. And a certain man who was an albino,[2] asked thus, "Nyikang, why do you stop? Is it because you do not find a passage?" He replied, "Yes, I do not see a way where to pass." The man said, "When I have finished eating, I shall come, I will be killed with a spear, my blood will flow into the river, and the sudd will break away." And Nyikang speared the man, his blood flowed into the river, and the sudd broke away. Thus Nyikang found a passage.

54. Nyikang and the River-people.

A kɛ̱ga Ńikań wak, a mɑ́tɨ́, a yōde yɛ̱́, rina wɑk yi lyɛk, a kōbi kine: jɑk, wei kɛ̱́á (kɛ̱́á) yi yɛi wun! jɑk ɛni ko: kipańɑ? Kine yau. A kɛ̱́ɨ́, che yɛi ni tɛ̱́na pɛ́, ka gɑ ní dɛ̱́dɨ́ yi Ńikań. A bɛn, a mágé gin, a kɛ̱le gɛ pach, a lāme gin, a lɑgɑ bāńg, a wei gɛ tɛ́ń, gɑ ni lām gɛn. A lɑge tygi lām, a wei gɛ Ńibɛ̱dɑ; ka ni bɛ̱ti Ńikań. Chwɑl gā kwar Wań, kɛ̄re yɛi lyɛk.

Nyikang went into the bush capturing; he saw (at a distance on the river) a boat, he ran from the high grass to a place where the grass was burned, then he called, "People, let me get into your boat!" The people asked, "Why?" He replied, "Just let me go in." When he got into it, the boat went to the bottom (was about to sink, this being caused by the witchcraft of the people in the boat); but Nyikang pushed it up again; then he came and caught them. He brought them into a village; he taught them to pray; they became his slaves (his subjects); he gave them the spear and taught them to pray. So they became the people of prayer. He let them reside at Nyibodo; they keep the (religious) things belonging to Nyikang. They are called the descendants of Wang, the descendants of the boat of the grassless plain.

55. The Lost Cow.

Kwɔjul e kwɔyi ɖɔk, ɖɔk Ńikań, ka ɖeań akyɛl e wdá, ka e kɛ̱ɖɑ kal ɖɑ Dimɑ. Ka e lɛ̱ŋɑ: ɖeań ɑgɑn? Kine: ɖeań tɛ̱k! Ka Ńikań wērɑ, ka e ko: yap ɖeań! Ka

[1] Vide 51.

Juok *Ficere*, means a whirlwind;
Juok *Nam*, " river spirit;
Juok *Acweci*, " creator;
Jane Juok, " things made by Juok such as food etc.;
Juok *Tin*, " wood spirit;
Juok *Ayin*, " protector.

Anything that cannot be understood is Juok. Juok is thus a plurality but he is also one spirit; he may be either good or bad, or neither, he is potentially all three. He may bring sickness, may protect people or he may merely stand aloof from human affairs. Certain diseases are specifically associated with him. The cult of Juok is not expressed in any external action or ritual; it is found in a few songs and prayers, and Juok is invoked only when appeals to the ancestors and to Nyikang fail.

THE CULT OF NYIKANG

Nyikang is the hero of most of the Shilluk myths and traditions. He is the culture hero, founder of the nation, and the popular ideal, and though probably an historical person in the first instance, his acts and words have become sacralised in myths. The Shilluk regard him as a divine or semi-divine being. They say he did not die but disappeared in a whirlwind during a festival held at Akurwa. The spirit of Nyikang is supposed to be present in certain places, men and animals. Every *reth* at the moment of his installation, when sitting on the royal stool, is possessed by the spirit of Nyikang so that it is Nyikang who becomes king again (see above). The spirit of Nyikang is regarded as closely associated with certain shrines, which are regarded as his homesteads; in particular he is present, at certain times, in his effigy at Akurwa.

There are ten shrines of Nyikang in Shilluk country, the most important being at Akurwa and Fenyikang. Seligman describes them as a group of two or more huts, of the same circular form as dwelling-huts but slightly larger, enclosed in a fence of millet stalks. The huts are particularly well thatched and the apex of the roof terminates in an ostrich egg from which projects the blade of a spear.(1) The huts are taboo to all except the priests of Nyikang and the old people who tend them. The attendants and priests of the royal grave shrines and the shrines to Nyikang are known as *bareth*; they are the ex-wives of kings, people liable to epileptic fits (which are held to indicate possession by Nyikang or a dead king), and certain old men who appear, according to Seligman, to have a hereditary connection with the shrine. The *bareth* keep the shrine clean, receive the sacrifices and officiate at the ceremonies. They eat the meat of the sacrifices and drink the milk of the cattle belonging to the shrine.

The worship of Nyikang at his various shrines consists of sacrifices and prayers. The two most important annual ceremonies are the rain-making ceremony, held just before the rains, and the harvest festival, when the millet is cut and first-fruits are offered to Nyikang. Each new *reth* should send cattle to each shrine of Nyikang and also various other presents. Offerings are given at the shrines when a person is sick so that Nyikang should make him well. Offerings and ceremonies invoking Nyikang's aid are

(1) Seligman, *Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan*, 1932, p.77.

5:Lienhardt E-4 (no date) 1954 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

which is now not exercised, to take part in the election of the Shilluk king. This right comes from Nyikang, who originally married his daughter to a Nuba, and received from the Nuba an inlaid stool, a replica of which is now the 'throne' of the Shilluk.[1] Such a myth, for the Shilluk, gives the Nuba a customary place in the social order of the Shilluk world. There are other examples which show that Nyikang explains differentiation, as he explains the relationship between the differentiated parts. One illustration may be taken from a myth of Nyikang's making people from animals,[2] and another, from the nature of the territorial divisions of the Shilluk kingdom.

It is said that when Nyikang first arrived in his land with his followers, he made people for his kingdom out of insects, fish, and animals. These he captured and turned into human beings, and they are the origin of the Shilluk common people. After Nyikang had made these people from the animal creation, 'the parent stock was removed by death', so that their children might not know of their origin. So the Shilluk common people derive their humanity, and their separateness from the animal creation, from the action of Nyikang. They claim, however, that their totems were given them by Nyikang,[3] who thus both separated them from the non-human creation, and also established an ordered relationship between some of the descent groups of his kingdom and various non-human species. According to another account, Nyikang alone was able to recognize that men were masquerading as animals and, seeing through this confusion, he captured them and made them into the men they really were.[4] This story shows Nyikang able to distinguish between appearance and reality, and to assimilate the reality to his kingdom.

Partition of the Shilluk kingdom by Nyikang

The clearest example of Nyikang's position in Shilluk cosmology—that is, their apprehension of the differentiation and the correlation of the parts of their world—is to be found in the territorial partition of the Shilluk kingdom, and this is here described at some length. Nyikang is thought to have entered present Shilluk country in the south-west, near Tonga, and to have moved along the west bank of the river until he established the northern limits of his country near Muomo, founding villages on the way, and associating them with his followers, his clients, or himself. The dominant lineages of various Shilluk settlements thus owe their association with the land in which they live to Nyikang. Westermann says that the Shilluk themselves think of their land as a whole by referring to Tonga and Muomo, its most northerly and southerly settlements, which term 'corresponds exactly to the expression of the ancient Hebrews: from Dan unto Bersheba'.[5] Shilluk country is now divided into two provinces, Ger, or Gerr, in the north and

[1] Hofmayr, 1925, p. 31.
[2] Westermann, 1912, p. 156; Oyler, 1918, pp. 111, 112.
[3] Hofmayr, op. cit., p. 235.
[4] Oyler, 1918 (i), p. 111.
[5] Westermann, op. cit., Introduction, xx.

5:Lienhardt E-4 (no date) 1954 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

631 Luak in the south, which, in some situations, are politically opposed to each other. These territorial and political divisions are associated, but not coterminous, with two religious divisions which Howell and Thomson call 'sees'.[1] One of these is called Gol Dhiang, and corresponds to the province of Ger and northern Shilluk-land. The other is called Gol Nyikang, and corresponds to Luak and southern Shilluk-land, which Nyikang first settled. These two religious divisions are separated by a stream or inlet of the river, the ceremonial crossing of which by the king-elect forms part of the ceremonies at his installation. The theme of crossing the river, already referred to, is thus repeated in the installation ceremonies for the Shilluk kings, and we find elsewhere how important in Shilluk thought is the crossing from one bank to another. There is, for example, a riddle, the ideas contained in which must seem curious to those for whom the separation of the banks of a river does not have such imaginative value. The riddle asks 'What is a big man, who knows only one bank?' and the answer is 'an island'. Hofmayr explains that an island, unlike the river or the stream, has only one bank.[2] There can thus be no crossing from bank to bank.

631 Ger and Luak each comprise a number of districts, which are the loose confederacies already mentioned, and seem to have been much modified by Turkish and British rule. It is clear, however, that in the past the really important divisions of Shilluk-land were the religious moieties, Gol Dhiang and Gol Nyikang, and that the boundary between them was the inlet of the river, called Arepejur, which is said to mean 'the gathering of the peoples'. Each of these moieties was divided into settlements. Of these settlements, some of which have given their names to the administrative districts to which they now belong, four were of special traditional importance. These were Muomo and Tonga, guarding the northern and southern marches, and the two settlements divided by the stream Arepejur and facing each other across the boundary between the moieties. The leaders of these latter settlements represented their whole moieties in the election of the Shilluk king, so that in this situation the leader of one settlement was also the leader of Gol Nyikang, and the leader of the other was also the leader of Gol Dhiang.[3] Just north of the boundary between Gol Nyikang and Gol Dhiang, and therefore technically in the northern moiety Gol Dhiang, is the present royal capital, Fashoda. The king's clan seems to be well represented on both sides of the boundary between these moieties.

In describing the Shilluk divisions of their country, it is easy to introduce the notion of an administrative system, with an element of superordination and subordination in the relations between the larger territorial units and

[1] Howell, and Thomson, 1946, p. 75.

[2] Hofmayr, 1925, p. 402.

[3] The history of the boundary between northern and southern Shilluk-land has been very confused. The details of this confusion do not affect Shilluk cosmology. Some of the information here given is from Pumphrey, 1941, but the main analysis of the significance of the religious moieties is taken from the way they functioned at the installation of the King Anei Kur, recorded by Howell and Thomson, 1946, and from the analysis given in Evans-Pritchard, 1948.

being crimes against the community, was that in cases of homicide the murderer (or his brother if the murderer was uncaptured) was compelled to become a *Bang Reth*.

Relations between a *Reth* and his retainers were friendly, nor does the treatment of those who were enslaved as a punishment appear to have differed from that of those voluntarily enlisted. The custom was for the retainers of each *Reth* to make a village for themselves near Fashoda. There they would live until the *Reth* died. The *Reth's* body would then be taken to this village and sealed up in a house where it would remain until entirely decomposed. Only then would the bones be removed by his retainers and buried in his original village. Some of the dead *Reth's* retainers would then move to the village where he was buried and their descendants would there remain with the perpetual obligation of tending his shrine. Others would remain at their village near Fashoda and would have no further obligations to the memory of their dead patron except that they and their descendants would for ever be known as "*Bang Reth Kwadhker*" or "*Bang Reth Nyakwac*" or as the case might be.

The retainers of a particular *Reth*, having severed connexion with their own clan, became a fictitious clan in themselves. As such they cannot intermarry, though there may be no relationship of blood. Nor could a *Reth* marry a daughter or sister of one of his retainers. A *Reth* would address the daughter of a retainer as *kwara* (my granddaughter) which well indicates the relationship subsisting between them.

Under the present regime, partly because the Government has frowned upon the practice and partly because the *Reths* are now deprived of their previous source of wealth, the *Reth* has none of these traditional retainers. To-day the *Bang Reth* comprise the descendants of retainers of previous *Reths*. In some cases they have removed themselves to a new locality but in any case they remain for ever *Bang Reth* "A" or *Bang Reth* "B" (in accordance with the name of the *Reth* their ancestors served) and never rejoin their original clan.

When a *Nyireth* was planted out the *Reth* used to send to live with him a few of his own retainers who became *Bang Nyireth* and

17: Pumphrey G-5 (1934-1938) 1941
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Thus of the present thirteen division chiefs only four hold traditional offices the others being government appointees over units based upon these rather vague confederacies. Though the four high chiefs do still possess an enhanced prestige their position is approximating rapidly to that of their less hallowed colleagues. This evolution to a more local form of government is a natural consequence of the inevitable lessening of the old autocratic power of the Rethship.

The impermanence of these confederacies is shown by a comparison between their composition in the Mahdia and their composition to-day (shown in Appendix IV), as also by the recent removal of the settlements of Mal and Abiangyei from Atodwoi Division to that of Detwok.

THE RETHSHIP.

The power of the *Reths* before Turkish interference was undoubtedly great. It was based partly on the semi-divinity with which tribal tradition clothes them and partly upon their great wealth in cattle and slaves. Justice was probably rough and large scale fighting more prevalent than litigation, such law suits as there were being seen, as previously mentioned, either by the settlement chief or by the *Reth* at Fashoda[29].

As well as wielding temporal power the *Reth* has always been the high priest of the tribal religion. Nyikang is mediator between God (*Juok*) and man, and each *Reth* is held to be a reincarnation of Nyikang. As high priest he has various obligations such as providing cattle for the sacred herds at Nyilual and Wau and providing a canoe for use at the shrine of Nyibodho (one of the Shilluk holy places).

Since the entry of the present Government the *Reth* has lost the means of acquiring wealth in cattle and is no longer allowed to have retainers of the traditional sort. He receives a substantial salary but this cannot purchase many cattle and his present comparative poverty has caused an inevitable decline in his temporal and spiritual prestige. The Rethship is living on its not inexhaustible store of divinity and the wonder is that the store has lasted so well.

29. The *Reth* is said to have had the enviable privilege of killing a tiresome litigant with a club.

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944)1946
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touch the ground, but always rested on the foot of the bearer when he stopped[15]. These three men took their place at the head of the "bull procession", and started for Fashoda.

We were told that as soon as they reached Khor Arepejur in front of Fashoda they would send messengers back to our village of Adodo and others ahead to the village of Debalo, where the king-to-be-inducted was residing. Then when the messengers arrived at the respective villages the two processions would start simultaneously from the villages about equal distance from Fashoda to meet at Khor Arepejur for the final ceremony.

After the Golbany and the old men left, preparations were made for a sacrifice inside the enclosure in front of the houses where reside Nyikang and Dak. I noticed that no one passed these houses without bowing low and saying *Kwa dibong*, which in modern parlance would be "Your Honour". A small ram was brought, and then was killed by having its throat cut. This ceremony was attended by only a few of the people gathered in the village, and the others did not seem to pay much attention to it. A few minutes later, however, a female goat was brought and tied to the enclosure, on the outside, and all the men in the village gathered and sat on the ground in an attitude of utmost respect, every man with his feet under him and the backs of his hands touching the ground in front of him. Most of the people in the village were the custodians of Nyikang and Dak and had been accompanying them on the eight-day march from the village of Akurwa, which is the traditional home of these gods. None of these men carried spears, but all were armed with whips of Nyikang, which is rather a testimony that these gods do not need clubs and spears to protect them, but men armed as women are sufficient to overcome all opposition. There were about sixty men in the group from the village of Akurwa led by their chief. As the young female goat baa-ed, one of the old men in the group addressed it thus, "why do you cry, are you not

15. This was the practice with all sacred spears, and the images of Dak and Cal as well. Nyikang of course was never put on the ground.

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944) 1946
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and over. The men beat alternately, and were accompanied by the people seated on the ground in front of them chanting together, "*Kwaa*, you are great, *Kwaa*, you are great."

A few minutes later young men brought out bundles of sticks and ropes called *ongero*, which had been brought from the Fanyikang district near Tonga.

At 9.15 a messenger appeared from Fashoda and the tempo of the drums was increased. Soon everyone in the village (including the women who had been keeping close to their houses) was seated in front of the houses. As the beat increased the people began to chant together "*Kwaa dibong, Kwaa dibong*", and to lean forwards and backwards. One man asked me why I did not place my hands on the ground and say "*Kwaa dibong*", and when I asked him if one should worship with the lips or with the heart, he quickly got the point, and said it was bad to worship only with the lips, for Nyikang would know. Then four men appeared with baskets on their heads over which were spread small mats. On inquiry I was told that no one knew just what was in the baskets, but on later inquiry I discovered they were the "things of Nyikang" such as his shoes, cloth, beads, food, and the like. At this point an old woman appeared from the house, and I was told she had been preparing Nyikang for the journey, and she was called *nyakwer* (Note 13) or *nyibang Nyikang* (slave of Nyikang). It seems she is something of a priestess in that she takes care of Nyikang at the village of Akurwa and resides in the temple of Nyikang. She now led the people in song, a few words of which I was able to get, and which were as follows:—"Open your mouth, Great One, and speak to us. Tell us what you are going to bring to us. Promise us the things we beg of you." This was repeated over and over with the old woman leading and the others following antiphonally.

The point behind the song is that these people of Akurwa are guardians of Nyikang, and they will not stir out of their village unless the new king promises them great riches. The new king had promised

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944) 1946
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643 on their heads. I recognised them as Kwa Nyikwom going back to Akurwa. Their return had been hastened by the early rain.

778 643 535 Fashoda had the party spirit, particularly the *reth*. He at once led me to the centre of Fashoda and I sat down in the shade of a cattle byre to be inconspicuous, for something was about to happen. Nyikang, Dak and Cal were all packed up and ready to go to Akurwa. They were in fact all three standing outside Aturwic. Everyone was dancing and singing.

The *reth* went up the mound and spoke to the people carrying Nyikang. Suddenly Dak and Cal followed by Nyikang came down from the mound and made a bee-line for me.

They rushed to where I was sitting and started dancing at me two paces away. The *reth* was dancing with them. They continued dancing till I gave them the token small piece of grass, which represented a bull, which I would give them at Kodok. They then went on, and did the same to any of the chiefs they found at Fashoda. The chief of Lul knew the honour would cost him a bull, and so he stayed discreetly in his house.

When Nyikang had thus gathered what he wanted for the journey home, they all danced round and round for an hour or more with the *reth* beside them. Then they became more solemn and as a final gesture they stood the *reth* under the folds of Nyikang's wrappings and sang the songs of Nyikang. The casting of the mantle of [777] Nyikang over the new *reth* was to bring him back luck. Nyikang, Dak, 643 the *reth* and the *reth's jal tyel kwom*, his chamberlain, were in the middle 778 of the small throng. The Ororo woman, who had enticed him away from *nyakwer* at the time of the installation, and some of the *reth's* sisters, were sitting around in front. I was about 10 paces away. [787] A small girl by my side swooned, and was possessed by Nyikang— [793] when she grew up, she would have charge of one of his shrines.

Then at last the party formed up and dashed off at a trot, on their way. The *reth* escorted them about 200 yards, and then came back. "Come and have a bowl of beer," he said "because it is hot."

24: Howell E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

forth from the shrine and marched northwards to beat the bounds of Shilluk country in Muomo. The march on Fashoda then began. It is accepted custom among the Shilluk that Nyikang and his followers may seize cattle, sheep or goats which cross their path (most Shilluk are wise enough to keep them out of the way) or to demand them as offerings together with other smaller gifts from the occupants of the villages through which they pass. This licensed plundering, which is often abused beyond the bounds of piety by Nyikang's retinue, is treated by the Shilluk with admirable tolerance, for they must know that such offerings go to fill the stomachs and pockets of the *kwa* Nyikwom It is a sacred duty cheerfully accepted. At one point on the march at Moro, however, their demands were thought to be excessive and were resisted, a demonstration which nearly ended in armed conflict and which delayed the party for a while.* They had left Akurwa on the 28th January and reached Adodo, south of Kodok, on the 4th February, and the next day, in accordance with custom, the *reth* fled to Debalo.

As we have seen, it is traditional for the *reth* to remain three nights in Debalo. In fact, *reth* Kur had already made it known that he did not intend to spend more than one night there, on the grounds that his father, Fafiti, had spent no more. Fafiti's break with tradition had been dictated by the fear that he might be deprived of office or killed by a rival and the natural anxiety of the administrative authorities to get through the ceremonies as quickly as possible. In those days, the likelihood of civil war was much greater and Fafiti had been urged to cut the installation ceremonies to a minimum.† Precedents of this kind count heavily in subsequent customary procedure and in this and in previous installations it was noticeable that each *reth* was inclined to follow the procedure of his father, not that of his immediate successor.‡ This is at least one of the explanations of the variations in detail which are apparent when we compare the installation ceremonies of those *reths* of the Shilluk of which records exist.

Reth Kur's decision to remain only one night at Debalo had two main effects. In the first place, fewer of those who seek absolution for the sins of the flesh (notably the seduction of unmarried girls) were able to attend, though I am told that about fifty persons presented themselves to the *reth* for this

* It appears that the effigy of Nyikang was damaged in the affray and had to be taken back to Akurwa for repairs.

† Mr. Udal writes: "When I visited the *reth* on the 26th January, he announced his intention of spending three nights at Debalo. However, when on the 2nd February there was still no definite news of the whereabouts of Nyikang, he did not attempt to disguise his irritation at the dilatoriness of the *kwa* Nyikwom and said he would follow the precedent of his father and sleep only one night at Debalo. Accordingly, after news of Nyikang's arrival at Adodo on the evening of the 4th February had reached Fashoda, *reth* Kur and Fafiti set out before sunrise for Debalo and it was arranged between the messengers of the *reth* and Nyikang that the battle should take place on the morning of the 6th February." *Reth* Kur's impatience may have been genuine, but I do not think he would have attempted to alter established custom if he had not the precedent of his father before him.

‡ For example, see Howell and Thomson, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
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According to the tribal mythology, Nyikang was no ordinary mortal. God, it declares, created a great white cow which came up out of the Nile and gave birth to a man child, Dhyang. His grandson Adak married a being who was half woman, half crocodile, and she became the mother of Nyikang. This affinity with the saurian inhabitants of the Nile gave Nyikang a special power over them; they came to his assistance during his great trek whenever his further passage was disputed by superior numbers, and at his command they emerged from the river, assumed human form and fought on his side until the opposition was overcome.

Mysterious was his birth; so too was Nyikang's passing from this earth. Being more than mortal, death, the lot of mortals, was not for him, but during a dance he was enveloped in a whirlwind and carried alive into Heaven. And there he reigns, not God, the great Jwok Atang, but the glorious divine intercessor with God for the Shilluk people. Nyikang is very much alive indeed to the Shilluk, for his spirit enters into every Shilluk king at his installation and dwells in him until his death.

The king, then, is the permanent manifestation of Nyikang to his people. He is their great high priest on earth; their intercessor for them with Nyikang, even as Nyikang is with God. Nay, more than that. It is conceivable that a European state could flourish and prosper under a sickly, or a mad, or a wicked king, or conversely, could weaken and decline, be its ruler a Hercules in strength and a Solon in administration. To the Shilluk, however, such a thing would be quite incomprehensible; to them the bodily and mental strength of the king exercises an influence upon the whole tribe, and upon it depends the well-being and the prosperity of the Shilluk race. Whilst he is strong and in full possession of his faculties the country will be prosperous; should his powers decline, then too will his people weaken and wane. Hence he must not be allowed to become enfeebled physically or mentally, must not be permitted to become senescent. For him there can be no question of abdication, of

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776 God is considered as being far off, aloof from mankind, caring nothing for the things He has created. Men do not
[782] then approach Him directly, nor, at least on great public occasions, presume to offer sacrifice to Him. Approach to God can only be made through the great mediator, Nyikang. It is Nyikang who, though he led his people into and left them in so sorry a plight, is reverenced as the Father and Saviour of the Shilluk people, is worshipped as a demi-
[775] god, and is thought of as always dwelling among them in
[782] the person of the reigning king. To him are all prayers made and sacrifices offered; in his honour sacred dances are
[778] performed. His numerous shrines, located in different parts of the country in which his spirit is believed to dwell, are
[793] carefully tended by the Bang Reth, to whom fall the perquisites of the meat of the sacrifices and the tributes of grain willingly surrendered from a meagre harvest in the sacred name of Nyikang.

776 The king, as the personification, as it were, of Nyikang
643 on earth, will offer the principal sacrifices on important
782 occasions during the year, for example, to obtain a plentiful
[789] rainfall and a bumper harvest, for the averting of the plague
[731] of weaver birds which descend on the country in their millions each year and devour the ripening grain, in times of drought and flood, of epidemic among the people and plague which is carrying off the cattle. On these and similar occasions is Nyikang invoked and sacrifice offered to him by
[634] the king himself and the district chiefs, and yet it is clearly understood by all that it is not Nyikang himself who will bestow the benefit or avert the disaster, but God, moved to clemency by the intercession of Nyikang for his people. And so the second and last article of the Shilluk Creed would run 'and in Nyikang, Son of God, Father of the Shilluk people, and our only intercessor with God for us'.

775 Alongside the cult of Nyikang, there is also a cult of the
769 dead. The Shilluk have only a vague notion of life after death in the Christian sense. They do, indeed, speak of the *Pa Jwok*, God's country, which is the abode of Nyikang and their ancestors, and which is reached only after months of

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778 776 king, Kudit, and during her father's reign assisted him by her very able administration of the northern province of the kingdom. She continued in this office until her death which took place during the reign of Kudit's successor, Aney. To [731] [782] this shrine in times of severe drought, or on the occasion of some other such public misfortune, comes the whole populace of the district to dance and sing and pray before it, to offer its tithes of grain, and to slay and sacrifice a bull to the spirit of Nyala.

● 793 782 The Shilluk do not possess a priesthood in the sense of a body of men dedicated to offer sacrifice; sacrifice may be offered publicly by the king or the chief of a district, or privately by any individual. There are, however, individuals 756 who claim to have supernatural powers, to be possessed by 754 Nyikang and to be the interpreters of his wishes, to foretell the future, to read auguries, to heal the sick, to avert or to cause evil. These people are of two kinds, the *Ajwogo*—literally, the 'man of God'—and the *Jal yath*, the 'medicine man'. The ajwogo deals in white magic, that is, his works 756 are, or are supposed to be, beneficial to the community or 755 the individual on behalf of whom his services are solicited. For a fee of a sheep or a goat or a cow, according to his rapacity and the circumstances of his client, he will do his best to cure or to kill a sick person that he has been called in to attend. For he will cheerfully administer a potion concocted of ingredients the potentialities of which, either for good or ill, he hasn't the slightest idea; will indulge in [757] blood-letting to an extent that would make an eighteenth-century leech blench with horror; and is not above performing a surgical operation, despite his complete ignorance of anatomy and surgery, with a rusty piece of iron, or a spear head or some other such Shilluk equivalent of the scalpel and lancet. At Detwok a lovely, high-spirited cheerful girl was reduced to a physical wreck after her ordeal at the hands of one of these wretches. She became ill and was attended by the Sisters who thought that she should go to hospital. Her pagan parents refused to allow this and instead called

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a Bareth of the shrine before which the sacrifice is made. 787
The king or chief who is present and who dedicates the 787
offering stands by and leads public prayer to Nyikang for 825
the blessing sought. The meat of the sacrifice is eaten by all [262]
present with special perquisites for the Bareth guardian of [793]
the shrine. Care is taken when cutting up the meat not to
break any bones. These are collected and thrown into the
Nile. The horns are stuck in the ground in front of the shrine, [237]
and the skin, scraped and cleaned, remains in the shrine as
a mat for the spirit that dwells therein.

When the new corn is cut, tithes are given to Nyikang. 243
Part of these belong to the Bareth and the remainder is 782
ground into flour and made into a thin porridge which is
poured on to the ground in front of and inside the shrine as
a libation to the residing spirit.

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Photo : Fr. F. Spelmeier

Right Reverend Monsignor Hart, Prefect Apostolic of Malakal (formerly Kodok) Prefecture and some of the Fathers